Reply.—The needs of this port have been met to some extent and its further development will be attended to.

V. Revenue and finance.

140. Encouragement of local manufacture of salt.

Mr. Ponnaiah Nadar of Eraniel (*Nominated*) suggested that the local manufacture of salt in the allams of South Travancore might be encouraged by importing Bombay salt only when absolutely necessary and enhancing the present kudivaram of 3 chs. in old pans to 6¼ chs. as in the new ones at Colachel.

Mr. S. Swamy Iyengar of Trivandrum (*Nominated*) said that a notice had been recently published by Government inviting persons to take up lands for the manufacture of salt. The conditions were a little hard, but some time should elapse before their defects could be pointed out.

Reply.—Government have already moved in the matter of increasing the manufacture of home salt. The notice inviting applications for the registry of lands for the manufacture of salt has been published in the Government Gazette and negotiations with some persons who came forward have been completed. The old rate depends upon tenure and agreement, but wherever improved methods are adopted at the expense of the ryots, the matter is will be favourably considered. Any suggestions which may be made by Mr. Swamy Iyengar as proposed will be thankfully received.

141. Arrangement for the sale of salt at a uniform reduced rate throughout the State and the opening of new salt bankshalls.

Mr. K. Appathura Iyer, B. A., B. L., (*Nedumangad*) represented that one effect of the recent abolition of Sirkar bankshalls was that the sale of salt was left to be carried on by private merchants and it was a matter for hardship that these persons caring only for profit dealt in salt of very inferior quality and demanded exorbitant price for the same. The price of salt varied directly with the mercantile enterprise of the locality, and the poor people, who in common with the rich could not avoid the use of salt, suffered heavily. He therefore suggested that some measures might be adopted by Government for preventing malpractices on the part of traders in this important matter and safeguarding the proper sale of salt of good quality at a uniform

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rate throughout the State.

Mr. Kanakku Mathevan Mathevan (*Nedumangad*), *Mr. P. Raman Tampi, B. A., M. L.*, (*Trivandrum*), *Mr. Ousep Kunjavirah Tharakan* (*Vaikam*), *Mr. R. Narayana Pillai* (*Ettumanur*), *Mr. K. Krishnan Pandalay B. A., B. L.*, (*Quilon*) *and Mr. C. Padmanabha Pillai* (*Karunagapalli*) dwelt on the hardship caused to the people by the recent abolition of salt bankshalls and the order prohibiting the sale of salt in small quantities from existing bankshalls. The members prayed for some relief in this direction and suggested the desirability of making arrangements for the sale of salt at a uniform reduced rate for the convenience of the public all over the State.

Mr. Kesavan Padmanabhan (*Mavelikara*) prayed for arrangements being made for the sale of salt at cheap rates to the people living in the interior taluks.

Mr. Narayanan Madhavan Karthavu (*Shertallay*) represented that the salt now sold by traders was of very inferior quality and that it was largely adulterated with sand.

Mr. K. G. Raghava Menon (*Changanachery*) observed that traders themselves were put to the greatest difficulty and inconvenience, at least in so far as Central Travancore was concerned, owing to the salt depôt at Alleppey not being worked in such a manner as to satisfy their demands.

Reply.—All that can be done is being done and will be done to prevent the irregularities complained of. But it is neither possible to enforce a uniform rate of sale, nor desirable to interfere with private trade. Out of 68 bankshalls, as many as 28 have been retained and 2 bankshalls newly opened at Udumbanshola and Kumili in the High Ranges for the convenience of the people living in that remote tract. For the benefit of the interior taluks, Government still maintain bankshalls at Koni, Kanjirapalli, Muvattupuzha, Todupuzha, Murinjapuzha, Elavur, Lalam and Peermade, besides those at the frontiers, and from these bankshalls the people of the interior ought to get their requisite supply. It is not possible for Government to go further. As regards the sale of salt at cheap rates, there is the Interportal Convention under which salt has to be sold here at the rates prevailing in British India. By the present arrangement, when salt reaches the outlying parts of the State

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from the depots, the price rises to the level of the British rate. It is therefore impossible to reduce the price everywhere to that which prevails at the depots without a breach of the conditions of the Convention. It is only six weeks since the new system began to work and it is not yet time to form an opinion as to its results. It is expected that competition will render salt cheap, especially as there is a margin of a quarter of a rupee per bag left for the benefit of the merchant or the consumer, by purchasing the commodity from the kuduchandrams or allams direct. Government also hope that with healthy competition the prices will adjust themselves in due course. The working of the new scheme will be watched with care.

Then, as regards the adulteration of salt, it is doubtful whether the salt sold at present is so bad as it is represented to be. Bombay salt is itself of inferior quality, but the people of this State have a predilection for it and its importation under present conditions cannot be helped. As you know, steps have been taken to improve the salt manufacture here so as to turn out the best kind of salt, and if it is produced in sufficient quantity and popularises itself among the people it may gradually tend to displace Bombay salt. The difficulty in the Alleppey depot to which Mr. Raghava Menon referred will be brought to the notice of the Excise Commissioner.

142. Arrangement for the sale of stamps in Anchal and Registration offices.

Mr. T. Kumara Pillai (*Kalkulam*) represented that at present stamp vendors offered to sell stamp papers at nominal rates of discount and put poor and ignorant people to considerable hardship and loss. No stamp paper was sold at its real value and very often parties had to go without stamps on account of the irregularities and vagaries of these men. He prayed that a large discount of about 15 per cent. might be allowed to stamp vendors and stamps directed to be sold from the taluk cutcherry, the Sub-registrar's office and the anchal office alike.

Reply.—It is not proper to burden anchal officers with the sale of stamp papers without giving them additional remuneration which the rules do not permit. Licensed vendors are generally stationed near registration offices. Wherever their number can be increased with benefit to the public, it will be done.

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